

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 VALLET 00727 310819Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12  
NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 SP-02 USIA-15 TRSE-00 OMB-01  
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/120 W

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: NATO, LY, UR  
SUBJECT: PRESS INTERVIEW QUOTING ADMIRAL SHEAR

1. TIMES OF MALTA AND SEVERAL (NATIONALIST PARTY ORIENTED) MALTESE LANGUAGE PAPERS HAVE GIVEN PROMINENCE TO REPORT THIS WEEK FROM NAPLES QUOTING ADMIRAL SHEAR IN INTERVIEW UNDER CAPTION "THE WEST MUST HELP MALTA, WARNS NATO ADMIRAL".
2. TEXT OF ARTICLE FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE "UNLESS THE WEST CONTINUES TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMY OF THE ISLAND, SOVIETS AND LIBYANS WILL HELP THE MINTOFF GOVERNMENT". THE WARNING WAS GIVEN BY ADMIRAL HAROLD SHEAR, HEAD OF THE ALLIED FORCES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE, IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE "MALTANAPOLI", JANUARY/MARCH 1978 ISSUE, UNDER THE HEADING "L'OCCIDENTE DEVE AIUTARE MALTA" (THE WEST MUST HELP MALTA).

ACCORDING TO ADMIRAL SHEAR, MALTA'S DECISION TO END THE BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE NEXT YEAR IS A REASON FOR PREOCCUPATION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN CHESS-BOARD. "MALTA, ALREADY A DEFENSIVE BASTION FOR THE WEST, IS SLIDING

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TOWARDS NEUTRALITY AND MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH LIBYA".

"MALTA WILL HAVE GREAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE LAST BRITISH CONTINGENTS NEXT YEAR. IF THE WEST DOES NOT CONTINUE, IN SOME WAY, TO SUSTAIN THE ECONOMY OF THE ISLAND, I CAN IMAGINE THAT THE SOVIETS AND

THE LIBYANS TOGETHER WILL OFFER TO THE MINTOFF GOVERNMENT  
THEIR PACKET OF AID SO ALLURING AS TO MAKE IT ALMOST  
IMPOSSIBLE TO REFUSE", ADDED ADMIRAL SHEAR.

FOR N.A.T.O. TO HAVE A BASE IN MALTA WOULD BE A GOOD  
THING BUT NOT ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL, AS SICILY IS SO NEAR.  
"BUT IT WOULD BE GRAVE IF THE SOVIETS AND LIBYANS WERE TO  
INSTALL THEMSELVES AT MALTA AND AVAIL THEMSELVES OF WHAT  
IT HAS TO OFFER (A MAGNIFICENT NAVAL DOCKYARD, GOOD  
HARBOURS, AN EXCELLENT AIRPORT AND OIL DEPOSITS (SIC)",  
THE ADMIRAL ADDED.

THE ADMIRAL MAINTAINED THAT THE SOVIET WARSHIPS  
CURRENTLY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN ARE ABOUT 40. THE WEST,  
HOWEVER, PRESERVES THE MAJORITY THANKS TO THE PRESENCE OF  
THE ITALIAN NAVY, IN A SMALLER MEASURE TO THAT OF TURKEY  
AND THE ALLIANCE'S AIRCRAFT CARRIERS,

THE ONLY SOVIET AIRCRAFT CARRIER, THE "KIEV", HAS  
RETURNED TO RUSSIA, BUT THE N.A.T.O. EXPERTS MAINTAIN  
THAT ITS RECALL IS ONLY TEMPORARY AND DOES NOT  
SIGNIFY THE SOVIET'S RENUNCIATION TO HAVE THIS TYPE OF SHIP  
IN A SEA WHICH MOSCOW LOVES.

ADMIRAL SHEAR, IN HIS INTERVIEW, ALSO SPOKE ON THE  
SOVIET'S HELP TO ETHIOPIA AND THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE  
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DISPUTE BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE REGARDING CYPRUS AND OIL  
EXPLORATION IN THE AEGEAN. END QUOTE.

3. COMMENT: INTERVIEW AS PLAYED HERE COULD HAVE SOME  
IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR TACTICAL AND POLICY APPROACH TOWARD  
POST-1979 MALTA. LAINGEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS CONFERENCES, POLITICAL PARTIES  
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**Review Markings:**  
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